these necessities. Like Mencius, he held that the economic basis of society is important. Both the principles of ethics and the correct rites he believed that he found in the words and acts of the sage-rulers of the past as recorded in the classical books. He denied, however, the existence of the spiritual beings whom the ceremonies were supposed to honor. He derided fortune-telling by reading physiognomy, and while he allowed thev traditional forms of divination by the state, he regarded them as undependable. He held that Heaven is not personal, but is unvarying law which automatically and infallibly rewards the good and punishes the evil. In the face of the confusion in existing society, he was an optimist, insisting that the universe is on the side of righteousness and that man's evil nature can be modified for good. He decried dialectic—emphasized by some contemporary philosophers—and believed that man can arrive at a knowledge of the eternal principles of the universe by reflection and meditation rather than by reason.

Of the philosophical schools of the Chou period, the next to Confucianism in lasting influence has been Taoism. The traditional founder was Lao Tzu, reputedly an older contemporary of Confucius and the keeper of the archives of the court of the Chou. He is a very shadowy figure and may never have existed. The little book attributed to him, usually called the *Tao Te Ching,* the most honored treatise of the school, is very possibly of the third century B.C. and is of very uncertain authorship.

The most prominent Taoist author, Chuang Tzii, flourished in the second half of the fourth century B.C. He was master of a vivid literary style, which later exerted a marked influence. In

addition to his writings, several fragments of other treatises of the school have come down to us, among them some bearing the name of Lieh Tzu, and possibly from the Han or Chin dynasty, several centuries later.

Taoism is so named from the *Tao,* an ancient Chinese term which the school used to represent the great reality back of and infilling the universe. In general the Taoists seem to have meant by it something akin to what Western philosophers call the Absolute. Knowledge of the *Tao,* they insisted, is not to be attained by reason and study, but by the mystic's way of contemplation and inward illumination. The real world, accordingly, is not that